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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001549

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TAGS: PGOV PREL EPET I2

SUBJECT: KDP REPRESENTATIVE ROWSCH SHAWAYS IN BAGHDAD TO DO BARZANI'S BIDDING

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Robert S. Ford for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. After a seven month hiatus from Baghdad, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Representative and former Deputy Prime Minister Rowsch Shaways met the Ambassador on June 11 and discussed current issues. Shaways affirmed that the Kurds oppose a referendum on the US-Iraq Security Agreement (SA) and stand ready to help. Regarding the UNAMI Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs) reports, he stated that the Kurds would have preferred that the reports reflect some sort of determination, providing the process with a baseline for negotiations. Possibly owing to Rowsch's arrival in Baghdad, President Talabani has scheduled a Presidency Council on National Security (PCNS) meeting, the first in seven months. In addition, Shaways said he will call to reconvene the Executive Council to discuss the Nineveh Provincial Council impasse, hydrocarbons legislation, and amendments to the 2005 national election law. Shaways' arrival in Baghdad signifies that Kurdistan Regional President (KRG) Masoud Barzani is serious about finally re-engaging with the central government. End Summary.

SECURITY AGREEMENT - KURDS READY TO HELP

¶2. (C) Shaways reiterated that the Kurds have always opposed a US-Iraq Security Agreement (SA) referendum and stand ready to help thwart efforts to move forward with a referendum. He intimated that the Sadrists and Iraqi Islamist Party (IIP) leader Osama al-Tikriti are against a delay in the referendum. Shaways reported that Talabani had scheduled a PCNS for that evening (June 11). (Note: The PCNS had not met since November 2008 when it discussed the SA itself. End Note)

UNAMI DIBs PROCESS - US ROLE?

¶3. (C) Shaways explained that the two Kurdish delegates for the UNAMI's High Level Task Force (HTLF), KRG Minister of Extra Regional Affairs Mohammed Ihsan and PUK MP Khalid Salam Sa'id al-Shwany received late notification and were unable to secure transport to Baghdad in time to attend SRSG De Mistura's June 10 luncheon. Instead, they arrived at mid-afternoon and met separately with De Mistura. Shaways made clear that their absence from the luncheon was not intentional and expressed confidence that the delegates plan on attending UNAMI's upcoming meeting June 16 meeting. Shaways said he that he not directly involved with the DIBs process and has not read the UNAMI reports.

¶4. (C) He did acknowledge that the reports represent UNAMI's diligence, but criticized them for not prescribing recommendations. He added that without UNAMI's judgments on these territories, there is no baseline for negotiation. He chuckled when he recalled that the Kurds vehemently condemned the four initial UNAMI reports that included more prescriptive language. Shaways said he believes that nothing

will come of the Council of Representatives (CoR) Article 23 Committee (established to make recommendations for the holding of provincial elections in Kirkuk). He said he would try to meet with Prime Minister Maliki to discuss convening the Executive Council (Presidency Council, PM plus KRG - PUK, KDP, ISCI, IIP, Dawa). He reiterated that the Kurds are serious about discussing these reports and possibly coming to a resolution in the future.

ARAB-KURD RECONCILIATION - EXPECT MORE DIALOGUE

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¶ 15. (C) Regarding Arab-Kurd tensions in Ninewa, Shaways was surprised and irritated that the Nineva's Kurdish leaders did not accept the Ambassador's invitation to attend his May 31 reception at the Mosul Cultural Museum. He suggested that KRG President Masoud Barzani would be informed and stated that it is the goal of the KRG to start a dialogue in Baghdad with the leaders of the parties involved. He reported that he has spoken with IIP's Ayad Sammaraie and Osama Tikriti, who have agreed that the Executive Council must be convened to discuss the political impasse in Ninewa.

MIXED PARTY COALITION FOR NATIONALS?

¶ 16. (C) Shaways stated that it will be difficult to pass a hydrocarbons law this summer but still believes it can be done. He also mentioned that the 2005 election law needs to

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be amended. He indicated that the Kurds would seek an amendment to make Iraq just one electoral district, a move that would favor regional, well-established political parties such as the KDP and PUK. A proponent of closed lists, Shaways said the Kurds are interested in exploring the possibility of forming a mixed party coalition that could choose a prime minister. He described Maliki's plan to reconstitute the United Shia Coalition (UIA) as problematic from the Kurdish perspective as it would guarantee the PM would always be a Shi'a. Shaways described the possibility of the Kurdish Alliance (KAL), IIP, former Prime Minister Allawi's Iraqiyya, and Iraq's Supreme Council of Islam (ISCI) forming one mixed coalition to compete with the UIA, giving the possibility of having a non-Shia Prime Minister.

COMMENT

¶ 17. (C) The return of Rowsch Shaways to Baghdad suggests that KRG President Barzani is serious about re-engaging with Baghdad to address several issues before attention switches completely to national elections. Historically, Rowsch Shaways has been the key individual authorized to speak for Masoud Barzani. Although he expressed uncertainty if his future holds an official KRG or GoI government position (e.g. the Deputy PM spot that could open up if Barham Salih becomes the KRG PM at the end of July), for now he is in Baghdad to do Barzani's bidding on hydrocarbons, amendment to the national election law, the SA referendum, Arab-Kurd reconciliation and the forming of a national mixed party coalition to run against PM Maliki.
FORD